

Victims with Disabilities

The FBI's Uniform Crime Reports show that in 1999, of the 9,301 reported bias-motivated offenses, twenty-one were motivated by disability bias, eleven of which were motivated by anti-physical disability bias and ten by anti-mental disability bias. (Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). 15 October 2000. *Crime in the United States, Uniform Crime Reports, 1999*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 59.)

Approximately 54 million Americans live with a wide variety of physical, cognitive, and emotional disabilities. (Tyiska, C. September 1998. "Working with Victims of Crime with Disabilities." *Office for Victims of Crime Bulletin*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime.)

Estimates indicate that at least 6 million serious injuries occur each year due to crime, resulting in either temporary or permanent disability. The National Rehabilitation Information Center has estimated that as many as 50% of patients who are long-term residents of hospitals and specialized rehabilitation centers are there due to crime-related injuries. (Ibid.)

Children with any kind of disability are more than twice as likely as nondisabled children to be physically abused and almost twice as likely to be sexually abused. (Ibid.; citing Petersilia, J. *Report to the California Senate Public Safety Committee Hearings on Persons with Developmental Disabilities in the Criminal Justice System*.)

Research conducted by the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN) in 1993 found that of all children who are abused, 17.2% had disabilities. Of all children who were sexually abused, 15.2% had disabilities. (Crosse, S., E. Kaye, and A. Ratnofsky. 1993. *A Report on the Maltreatment of Children with Disabilities*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of

Health, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Child, Youth, and Families, National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect.)

Of the children with maltreatment-related injuries, child protection case workers reported that maltreatment directly contributed to, or was likely to have led to, disabilities for 62% of the children who experienced sexual abuse, for 48% of children who experienced emotional abuse, and for 55% of children who experienced neglect. (Ibid.)

Research consistently shows that women with disabilities, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or class, are assaulted, raped, and abused at a rate of two times greater than non-disabled women. (Sobsey, D. 1994. *Violence and Abuse in the Lives of People with Disabilities*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes; Cusitar, L. 1994. *Strengthening the Links: Stopping the Violence*. Toronto: DisAble Women's Network (DAWN).

The risk of being physically or sexually assaulted for adults with developmental disabilities is likely four to ten times as high as it is for other adults. (Sobsey, D., supra.)

People with developmental and other severe disabilities represent at least 10% of the population of the United States. Of this population group: 1.8% of the individuals have developmental disabilities; 5% of the individuals have adult onset brain impairment; and 2.8% of the individuals have severe major mental disorders. (Sorenson, D. November 1996. "The Invisible Victim," *The California Prosecutor*, XIX (1).)

Note: OVC makes no representation concerning the accuracy of data from non-Department of Justice sources.

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